

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested. By the foregoing amendment, claims 1 and 10 have been canceled. Claims 9 and 20 have been rewritten in independent form. Claim 12, which had formerly been independent, has been amended to depend from claim 20. As such, claims 9 and 20 remain the sole independent claims pending. All of the remaining pending claims 2-8 and 11-19 depend from independent claims 9 and 20.

On page 2 of the Office Action, Figure 1 is objected to as not being labeled "Prior Art". Accordingly, submitted herewith is an annotated sheet of Figure 1 showing "Prior Art" in red and a replacement Figure 1 wherein "Prior Art" has been added.

Later on page 2 of the Office Action, the drawings are objected to as failing to include reference symbols for a communication bus 5 and a bus coupler 4 in Figure 2. These elements were generally illustrated in Figure 1, and discussed with respect to Figure 1 in the Background portion of the specification. To address the Examiner's concern that a communication bus 5 and bus coupler 4 be illustrated in connection with the exemplary embodiment of Figure 2, the attached annotated sheet of Figure 2 includes modifications to Figure 2 whereby these elements have been illustrated and a replacement sheet of Figure 2 includes these modifications. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objections to the drawings on page 2 of the Office Action is requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication in numbered paragraph 12 on page 14 of the Office Action that claims 2-3, 6-9, 14-15 and 17-20 contain allowable

subject matter. Accordingly, by the foregoing amendment, claims 9 and 20 have been rewritten in independent form. All of the remaining claims depend from independent claims 9 and 20, respectively. Although Applicants disagree with the rejections set forth in numbered paragraphs 5-11 of the Office Action, claims 9 and 20 have been rewritten in independent form in an effort to expedite allowance of the present application, without waiving Applicants right to pursue independent claims 1 and 10 in a continuation application. For purposes of the present application, the rejections are deemed moot, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

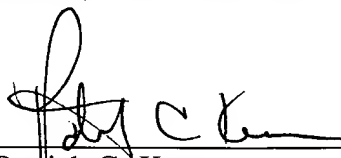
All rejections and objections raised in the Office Action having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. However, should there be any remaining questions, it is respectfully requested that the undersigned be contacted at the number shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

Date: July 15, 2003

By: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Patrick C. Keane  
Registration No. 32,858

P.O. Box 1404  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404  
(703) 836-6620



PRIOR ART

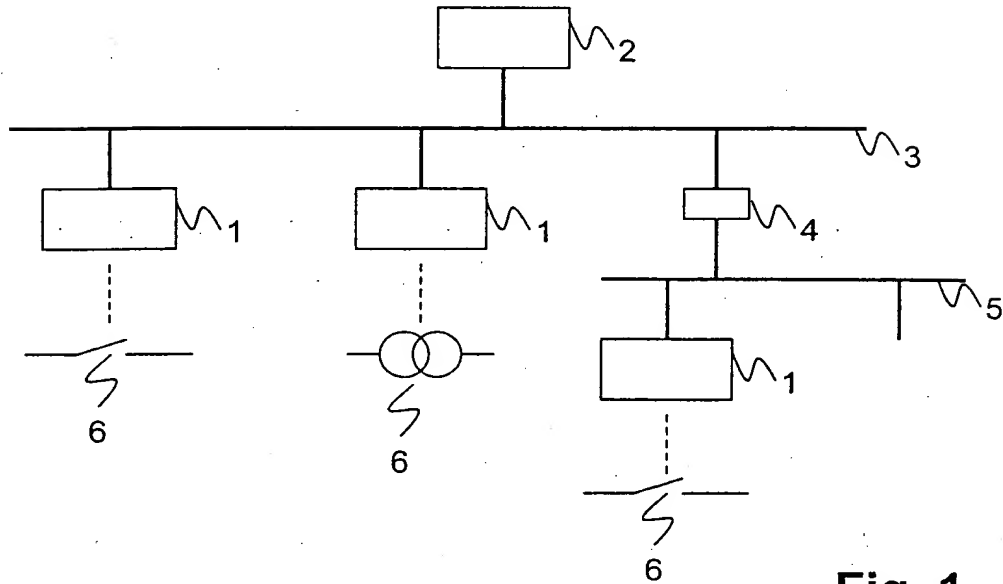


Fig. 1

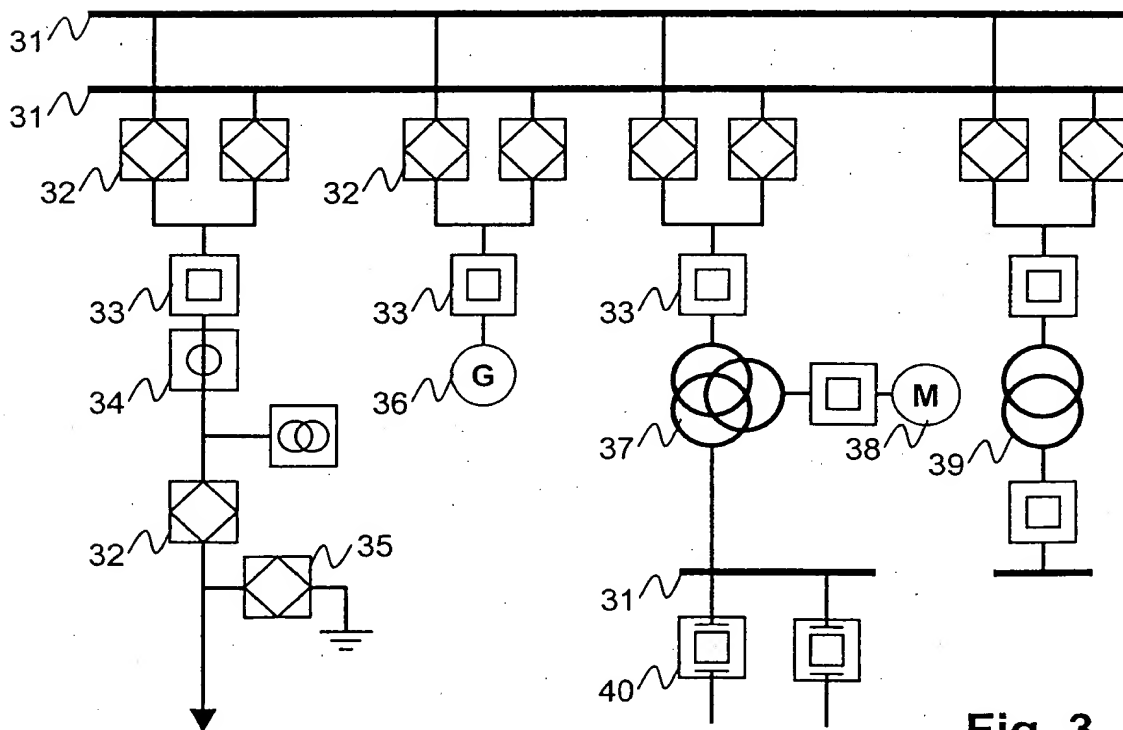


Fig. 3

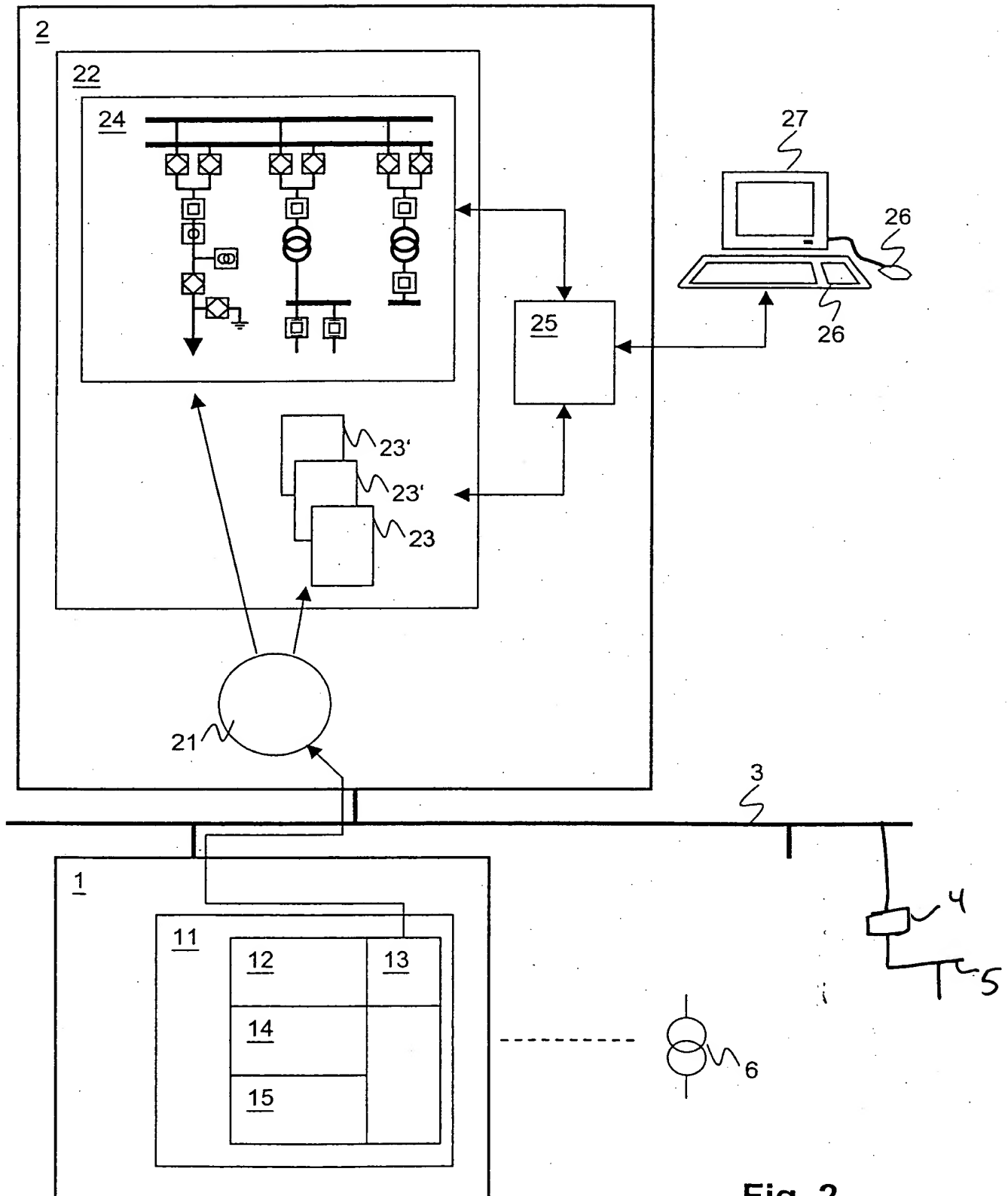


Fig. 2